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Message Text

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43
ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07

INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-06

SAM-01 OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 PA-01 PRS-01

EPA-01 NRC-05 /094 W
---------- 009613
R 051007Z MAR 76
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9659

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BANGKOK 5125

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ENRG, TH
SUBJECT: PETROLEUM: UNION OIL COMPANY'S PLANS

REF: BANGKOK 3345

1. UNION OIL PRESIDENT FRED HARTLEY CALLED AT EMBASSY MARCH 2 TO BRIEF AMBASSADOR ON UNION'S TALKS WITH RTG ABOUT PROPOSED NATURAL GAS PIPELINE PROJECT BEING PROMOTED BY MINISTER OF INDUSTRY SURIN TEPKANCHANA (TEXT OF UNION'S PRESS RELEASE FOLLOWS). HARTLEY STRESSED THAT ADDITIONAL EXPLORATION WILL BE REQUIRED TO ASSESS EXTENT OF NATURAL GAS RESERVES IN GULF AND THAT FINANCING FOR PIPELINE WOULD BE MATTER FOR RTG TO RESOLVE.

2. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. TEXT. IT WAS ANNOUNCED TODAY THAT UNION OIL COMPANY OF CALIFORNIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE HERE TO MEET WITH MINISTER SURIN THEPKANCHANA AND HIS ASSOCIATES TO DISCUSS VARIOUS PROBLEMS AND CONDITIONS WHICH MUST BE CONSIDERED AND RESOLVED BEFORE A DECISION CAN BE REACHED TO UNDERTAKE A NATURAL GAS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN THE GULF OT THAILAND. THE VISIT HERE FOLLOWS A TRIP BY MINITER SURIN AND OTHER THAILAND OFFICIALS TO
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UNION OIL IN LOS ANGELES LAST FALL.

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SUBJECT OF THE DISCUSSION CENTERS AROUND POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OF THAILAND GAS FOR THAILAND CONSUMPTION, BY UNION AND ITS PARTNER, SOUTHEAST ASIA PETROLEUM EXPLORATION CO., LTD. (SEAPEC). TO DATE, UNION-SEAPEC HAVE DRILLED FOUR WELLS WHICH HAVE SHOWN A CAPABILITY TO PRODUCE GAS AND CONDENSATE IN THE GULF OF THAILAND.

MR. FRED L. HARTLEY, CHAIRMAN AND PRESIDENT OF UNION OIL, SAID COMMERCIAL GAS RESERVES HAVENOT YET BEEN PROVEN AND THAT HIS COMPANY FEELS THAT SEVERAL ADDITIONAL EXPLORATION AND ASSESSMENT WELLS WILL BE REQUIRED TO PROVE UP SUFFICIENT RESERVES TO ENTER INTO A GAS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. TO ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE, FURTHER DRILLING IS IN THE PLANNING STAGE.

CONCURRENTLY, AGREEMENTS WITH THE THAILAND GOVERNMENT MUST BE CONCLUDED COVERING GAS MARKETS, GAS PRICING AND PIPELINE FINANCING. THIS PROCEDURE IS ESSENTIAL BEFORE THE GAS PROJECT CAN BE CALLED COMMERCIAL. WHEN THE GAS RESERVES ARE PROVEN AND A MUTUAL DECISION IS THEN MADE TO PROCEED, HARTLEY SAID, SEQVERAL YEARS WOULD BE NEEDED TO DEVELOP THE FIELD, CONSTRUCT FACILITIES AND INSTALL THE GAS TRANSMISSION PIPELINE TO BANGKOK. END UNCLASSIFIED.
WHITEHOUSE

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